

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are presently pending, of which Claims 1-14, 22, and 30 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Rejection of Claims 15-21 and 23-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 15-21 and 23-29 as being obvious over Japanese Patent Publication 8-137375, published on May 31, 1996 (hereinafter "'375 Patent") in view of U.S. Patent 4,576,850, issued to Martens on March 18, 1986 (hereinafter "Martens").

The '375 Patent describes a process wherein a photosensitive resin composition layer 1 is provided on a base 2. A mold 3 is brought into contact with the layer 1 and heat and pressure is used to form relief patterns 4. The mold 3 is apparently removed and the patterns 4 are then subject to irradiation with light 6 via an arbitrary mask 5, by which regions partially varying in the degree of curing are formed. The relief image forming material formed with the cured regions partially varied in the degree of curing is softened and deformed by heating at a specific temperature, by which visually checkable contrasts are generated between the cured regions varying in the degree of curing. The deformed patterns are thereafter fixed by applying full-surface exposure thereon.

Martens discloses an article comprising a shaped, plastic layer or body comprising crosslinked polymer with hard and soft segments or moieties and having a microstructure-bearing surface is prepared by a process comprising filling a mold master, bearing or encoded with the microstructure to be replicated, with a fluid, castable, one-part, preferably solvent-free, radiation addition-polymerizable, crosslinkable, synthetic, organic oligomeric composition (or precursors thereof) having "hard" segments and "soft" segments, exposing the resulting cast composition to radiation, preferably actinic radiation such as ultraviolet radiation, and thereby forming said article, e.g., a retroreflective cube-corner sheeting, Fresnel lens or video disc.

Applicant claims a method for continuously forming a pattern in a radiation curable material that includes providing between a radiation source and the radiation curable material, a blocking pattern that can block a portion of the radiation from the radiation source. The material is cured with radiation from the radiation source through the blocking pattern to form a pattern in

the radiation curable material as the radiation curable material passes the radiation source, said pattern including a first cured portion cured to a first amount and a second cured portion cured to a second amount. The first amount is sufficiently different than the second amount to result in a visible discontinuity on the surface of the structure.

The Examiner looks to Martens to show a transparent base disposed between a lamp and the material to continuously form an optical structure. There is still no teaching or suggestion in Martens of forming differentially-cured structures in a continuous fashion with a blocking pattern that can block a portion of the radiation from the radiation source. Further, there is no disclosure or suggestion for aligning a blocking pattern between a radiation source and the radiation curable material for use in a continuous process. Additionally, the '375 Patent does not remedy the deficiencies of Martens. There does not appear to be any disclosure or suggestion in the '375 Patent of continuously forming in a radiation curable material a pattern that includes a first cured portion cured to a first amount and a second cured portion cured to a second amount with the first amount being sufficiently different than the second amount to result in a visible discontinuity on the surface of the structure. Further, there is no disclosure or suggestion for aligning a blocking pattern between a radiation source and the radiation curable material for use in a continuous process.

Thus, the rejection with respect to independent Claims 15 and 27 is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 23 recites that the radiation curable is connected to a base disposed between the radiation curable material and the pattern. Although Martens appears to disclose this limitation, there is no teaching or suggestion of using a pattern to form a discernible pattern in a radiation curable material, wherein the discernible pattern includes a first cured portion cured to a first amount and a second cured portion cured to a second amount. Again, there is no teaching or suggestion of combining the teachings of the '375 Patent and Martens in such a way so as to render the claims of the present application obvious.

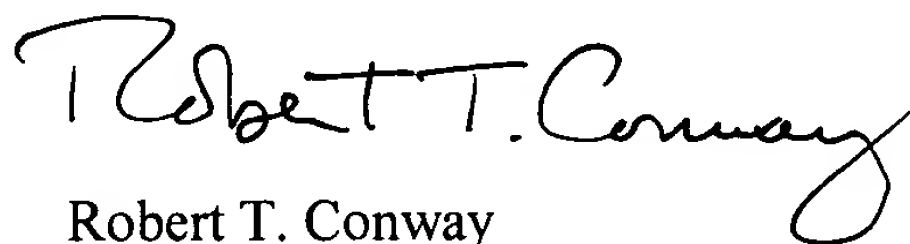
Therefore, the claims are not obvious in view of Martens and the '375 Patent alone or in combination thereof.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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